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## GUATTARI "LINES OF FLIGHT": THE HYPOTHESIS OF MODES OF SEMIOTISATION (1 & 2)

PHILOFICTION DELEUZE/GUATTARI, GUATTARI, LINES OF FLIGHT, NON-PHILOSOPHY, TRANSVERSALITY

Liveblogging reading Felix Guattari's book LINES OF FLIGHT, translated by Andrew Goffey.

The unconscious, for Guattari, is "structured" like a multiplicity of modes of semiotisation. This hypothesis contains in germ Bruno Latour's multiple modes of existence, which are also modes of semiotisation:

If it was still necessary to talk about structure with regard to the unconscious – which is not self-evident, a point we will come back to – we would say instead that it is structured like a multiplicity of modes of semiotisation, of which linguistic enunciation is perhaps not the most important (LINES OF FLIGHT).

This implies no abandon of the Real for a facile relativism. The real is not linguistic but material, for Guattari. That explains why multiple modes of semiotisation, and not just the linguistic mode, are possible.

Lacan is no materialist, and he does not argue very much in terms of the posited materiality of the signifier. A few explicitly materialist slogans do not compensate for the linguistic idealism of the rest. Nor are Freud and Lacan paragons of scientificity. The most that they show is that language is important, and itself material, they do not show that the psyche is totally, or even predominantly linguistic – that is a separate question. Lacan has rightly corrected a naive empiricist neglect of language in favour of a fictive "raw experience". But he himself has exaggerated in the opposite sense, of a language-laden absorption of experience.

Guattari's bold conjecture is that there are many modes of semiotisation, which while making use of language, are not reducible to it. Science, the arts, religion, the economy, etc.

Freud's theory is mired in scientific primitivism, which is why it needed Lacan's linguistic structural re-interpretation to make it bearable. The "causality" of the signifier is a magical idealism expressed in quasi-scientific terminology. Lacan represents a half-way house between Freud and Jung, who recognised the power and the materiality of the signifier with his word-association test, before and independently of Freud.

Our shared language is both collective and unconscious in its semiotic structures. This is another case where Lacan's concentration on the signifier constitutes a half-way house between Freud and Jung. All of Freud's thought is a case of magical thinking from a materialist point of view, in that he can give no real material status to the unconscious, nor can any material substrate be given to "psychic causality". Hand-waving is not explication.

Freudism is a promising but unfinished project, if evaluated in materialist terms. Personal analysis is no scientific proof. It demonstrates psychic causality but not material causality, which is an ontological supplement provided by the nostalgic scientific faithful. Analysis varies from one practitioner to another, and mobilises multiple semiotic régimes. Guattari's hypothesis of multiple modes of semiotisation is both more descriptively adequate and more speculatively plausible than any scientific or linguistic idealist reductionism.

My approach in reading LINES OF FLIGHT is non-professional. It is that of a marginalised non-academic philosopher. This state of affairs constitutes my *transferential* relation to Guattari's text.

I am not personally involved in the practicalities of analysis or of the institutional treatment of psychosis, but I think that Guattari's concepts can be applied to my own situation and to that of many others. This is my *transversal* relation to the text.

We need some small degree of transference to get hooked onto by a text, and a great degree of transversality to apply it elsewhere than in its own territory.

Guattari's contribution to Deleuze and Guattari's collaborative philosophy has mostly been downplayed or ignored, not only by academics faithful to the institutional vision, but also by those who are critical of the academic approach: Badiou, Žižek, Laruelle, Latour. Andrew Goffney begins his very interesting preface to Guattari's *LINES OF FLIGHT* by regretting this state of affairs:

Félix Guattari has not been well-served by the academic machine. He was marginalised almost from the start of his joint work with Gilles Deleuze, who was generally seen as the brains behind *Anti-Oedipus*.

Latour's "empirical metaphysics" reprises Guattari's earlier existential and experiential approach to theorising. His recent emphasis on the need to "strengthen" institutions before criticising them, and on the current "fragility" of institutions, is an ambiguous reminder of Guattari's call for institutional analysis.

Yet there was always an institutional – and experiential – challenge embodied in their double-headed writing machine that all too easily falls by the wayside when Guattari's role is downplayed.

A passion for theory need not be "scholarly", and academic reinscription need not be the model that all theorising must aim for. Deleuze valued Guattari for his "philosopher-becoming", and not for his institutional credentials.

what is preferred is an inscription of their thinking within canonised scholarly problematics (that Deleuze for one was always quick to repudiate).

Guattari's philosophical becoming was itself complex, a multiplicity of transversally interconnected becomings, a rhizome with multiple points of entry. Delirium was one starting point. Another was fiction. Their book on Kafka and the writer's confrontation with the "diabolic powers" of the future can be read as a theorisation of what Laruelle would later call "philo-fiction".

schizophrenic delirium, with its 'world historical, political, and racial' content serving for them as something of a starting point for understanding both the 'diabolic powers' knocking on the door, as well as the compromises established with those powers by psychoanalysis.

Academic philosophy, like psychoanalysis, is guilty of the contradiction of a seeming methodological individualism embedded in a collective, itself embedded in an institution. Guattari's concern for acknowledging and for dealing with the madness inside the dialogical partners of philosophical training reveals an implicit hierarchical and monological substrate that is overt in the university setting. Philosophical dialogue composes explicitly with this madness. This engagement is rare in the academic setting.

Guattari evinced a desire to escape from what he saw as the 'methodological individualism' of psychoanalysis, its reliance on one-on-one dialogue and its lack of engagement in the difficult, ongoing task of treating psychosis in the institution.

Delirium is not the only way into Guattari's thought (an exploration of delirium as philosophical method in Deleuze and Guattari's *WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?* can be found here). Other starting points for Guattari were non-Euclidean geometries, as well as relativistic and quantum physics.

"Non-philosopher" François Laruelle should have hailed Guattari as a precursor. If he had done so perhaps we would have been spared the doxic corporatism of the Anglophone Laruelleans. We would have had none of the regressive appeals to Lacanian theory, a simplified Badiou repackaged in non-philosophical terminology. Laruelle himself is close to Badiou on this point, regressing to pre-Guattari problematics.

the transindividual processes that are put into play in and by an unconscious that is somewhat refractory to apprehension within the enunciative space-time of 'ordinary' analysis.

Deleuze has given interesting analyses of the alienated relation between author and reader that is implicit in the contractual approach to the book, with its subjacent hierarchies. There is more to this pseudo- contract than an exchange between two individuals, the author and the buyer, assigned to the role of passive consumer.

The phony 'contractualism' of the analytic relationship, with its ostensible exclusion of third parties and focus on the individual,

Guattari's concept of "transversality" democratises the transference, by freeing it from the sufficiency of psychoanalytic theory and the individual experience of analysis. Transversality is the intensive complex encounter, transference is its contractual simplification. Reading a book can be either transference or transversal. The academic transference is the backward-looking activation of the repression of past traumas, paving them over with stereotyped concepts.

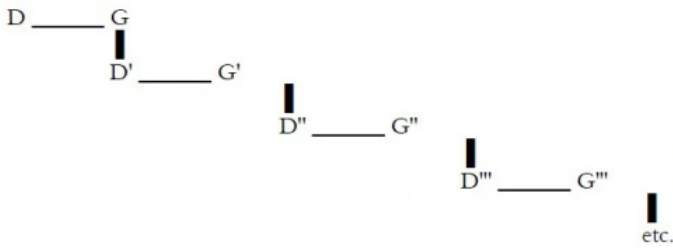
Guattari's conceptual displacement/relativisation of analytic 'transference' by institutional 'transversality' is one particularly fruitful outcome of the complex encounter between politics, therapy, psychoanalysis and the psychiatric hospital

The neo-liberal contract of the book conceals a tacit hierarchy in which the institution (the academy, philosophy itself) figures as third partner. A fourth partner is the "unconscious", a machinic production of intensity and singularity caught up in processes of subjectivation, in what Badiou calls truth processes.

it sustained a rethinking of the unconscious in a social direction, breaking down the tacit hierarchy – inside and outside the institution – on which the 'contract' rested.

Note: transversality means that there is no "correct" point. The academy is not to be excluded, and there is no automatic glory in the non-academy. Both can be bases of transferential identities, just as both can be nodes of transversal deconstruction.

Here is Laruelle's dyadic retranscription of the Deleuze-Guattari rhizome:



(Source: <https://linguisticcapital.wordpress.com/2013/03/13/laruelles-fragments-of-an-anti-guattari/>.)

Anyone with even a smattering of acquaintance with Guattari knows that this diagram is radically erroneous. Guattari begins with the rupture of the transferential dyad, of the Two. There is always a third involved – the institution, and a fourth – the transversal unconscious.

Laruelle in his non-philosophy phase was incapable of seeing the rupture with dyadism that Guattari effectuated (by means of his concept, and practice, of transversality). Now that he has moved into a new phase, that of "quantum" or non-standard philosophy he should retract his earlier critiques of Deleuze and of Guattari.

I say all this to widen the context, and to make it clear that Guattari's texts are by no means irrelevant to current debates or theoretically antiquated. Recent transferential schools such as OOO (Object-Oriented Ontology), SR (Speculative Realism) and NP (Laruellean non-philosophy) rely on a public of readers who have forgotten, or who are too young to have known, the free play of speculation that was prevalent in the Continental philosophy of the sixties and the seventies.

taken from Agent Swarm

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